

The Omen



The Omen

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Policy Box!

The Omen accepts from any member of the Hampshire community. We will not edit anything you write, as long as you are willing to be responsible for what you say. Libel, which we personally find amusing and entertaining for countless hours is just not able to be printed in this forum.

Submissions, which includes just about anything involving the Hampshire community in some way (news, opinions, artwork, etc.), are due on Saturday nights at 8:00 to the editor of the section in which you wish to appear, or to Ben Sanders (E-307, box 710), Jonathan Land (E-311, box 527), or Dave Wilcox (Mod 56, take a walk to Enfield, you bastards, box 865). We prefer submissions on disk (IBM or HIGH DENSITY Macintosh), although hard copy (on paper, dumbass) is okay as well. Label your stuff well and it will make it back to you with no problem.

So give us your news, commentary, short fiction, comics, satire, poetry, art, bulletins, questions, and anything else you can think of, and your beloved community rag will dish it back 250 times. What better way to be heard?

"We don't take no shorts."

-Flavor Flav

CONTENTS

Page 3.....	All Because of Some Queen
Page 5.....	NEW SECTION!!! Same old Cole
Page 6.....	OLD SECTION!!! Brand new Mulvany
Page 8.....	The Return (again) of Matthew Flaming
Page 9.....	Some Joke About Ben and Seven Inches
Page 11.....	Pun Involving a Helmet and the Band of the Same Name
Page 12.....	I Ain't Afraid of No Ghost
Page 14.....	Horoscopes

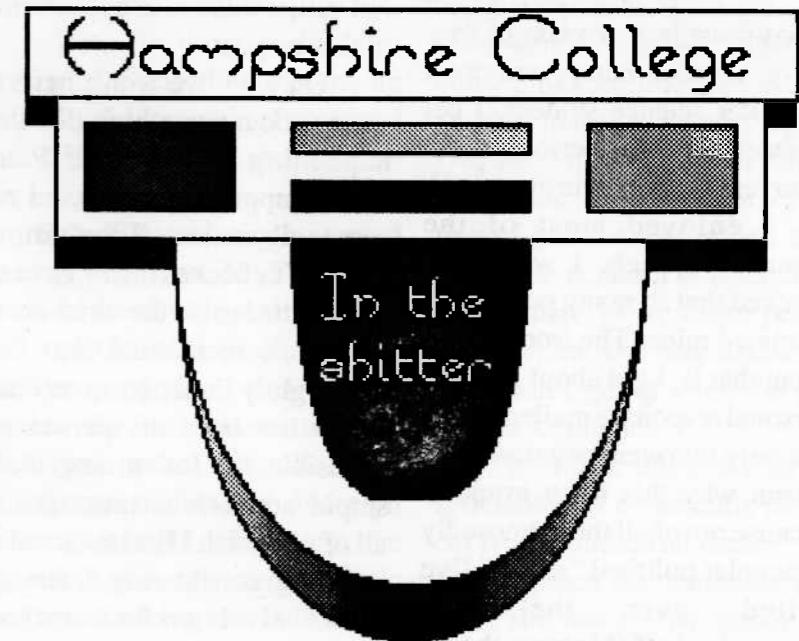


Unity Through Stupidity

Hello kids. In case anyone missed it, the closest thing resembling community occurred last week. No, it wasn't really political, and no, it wasn't really a socially cultural event. It was downright stupid, entertaining fun on the ol' internet.

Yeah, you know, that little box on your, or the library's computer saying "hamp". That's right, it does a whole lot more than let you read up on alt.fan.dumbasses and alt.pictures.burn_victims. It lets you talk to people on our fair campus (and beyond), that you might normally not talk to.

Example? Hmm...OH YEAH, that "snow queen" incident last week. Out of an act of totally moronic retardation (no, I meant retardation in the "good" way) someone promoted the most discussion between various members of campus in a long time. Congratulations to you who wrote the first message bitching about some heartless monster crushing your snowman. Not only, did you do something so mindless and absurd in whining about something as trivial as a lousy snowman (Do you have work to do, or do you just take *Top Rope Climbing*, and one or two other OPRA courses? You need to see your advisor, you're not doing enough.), you whined about it to every last student on campus.



Absolutely brilliant.

And the responses, oh the responses... Thank you to everyone involved for taking part, even you stick-in-the-muds who wrote stuff like "I +++DO NOT+++ FIND THIS AMUSING, STOP ITNOW", etc. The funniest thing is, most of the people who wrote things like this are guilty of the same crimes as the people who "flamed". The only difference is the people who "flamed" responded to all_student for fun, to all people intentionally, but all the people who "grumped" responded to all_students, when they really just wanted to talk to those who were "flaming". Didn't you realize that you "grumps"

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the short amount of time needed to do that. Instead, you are merely a lazy hypocrite. Oh, by the way, what were you distracted from, e-mailing someone or checking out altfan.wasting_huge_amounts_of_time.

If you were on hamp, and not a computer science student, I bet you weren't doing serious work. Your reality check is in the e-mail.

I enjoyed most of the "flames" though. I was truly shocked that so many people appreciated mine. The ironic thing about that is, I got about 16 or so personal responses mailed to me, and only two were negative. The reason why this is so ironic is because out of all the supposedly unpopular political "stunts" I've pulled over the past year-and-a-half (Megans, the retard poll, World Aids Day last year, etc.), this was the one I received the most commentary from the community on. As a

matter of fact, this beats them all, combined. Go figure. It's the most new people I've "met" since I first came here. I don't know whether or not I'll keep in touch with any of them or vice-versa, but still, it was a nice opportunity in that respect.

Oh well, we won't have to worry about something like that happening again since Peter Tomb supposedly restricted access to all students (I don't know, I haven't checked), and gave us all a firm slap on the wrist about the whole incident. I also find this slightly ironic because Peter Tomb has been the person responsible for forwarding those stupid admissions messages to all of us, which I find to be rather insulting considering I already work twelve hours for this school at this shit salary. Between my work, my classes, and my classwork, I have very, very little free time. I especially don't have

Jonathan Land
Managing Editor
The Omen

**I want the Omen. I need the Omen.
I love the Omen.**

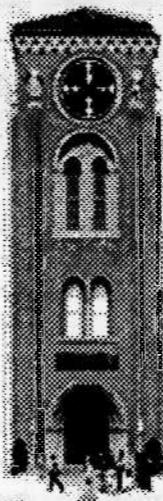


I want the Omen in my box every week. My name is _____, my box is _____.



I'm Merrill house staff and I can't handle the truth. My name is _____, and I quit.

Send this to Box# 527



THE WATCHTOWER

I Jerked Off, But I Didn't Come

When Bill Clinton ascended to the four-year-warranty ejection seat that serves as the executive throne in the is country, no

one was more horrified at Hampshire than this humble editor. Granted, he was a little better than Jerry Brown (and going to school at this place, it looked like Governor Moonglow had a microcosm with a chance) but he was still a shifty-eyed Democrat, with a running mate who slept with the head of the PMRC. Shudder.

At the time, still caught in the mindset of having to be either a pachyderm or an ass, I was a Republican. Sort of. I mean, given the scenario of George Bush running my country, or Bill Clinton giving it the runs, I was for Bush (although, in a fit of ill-motivated support for the three-party system, I actually voted for Perot. Yeah. Well. I was young.). I'm now an independent with Libertarian leanings. Anyone who knows me is familiar with my megalomaniacal desire to create my own party and eventually control the nation. But that's all in the future. And what this column deals with is happening right now.

So, as I said, the idea of bill Clinton setting up shop in the Caucasian shack left me feeling

less than Mentos fresh and full of life. I was pretty horrified. Two years of health-care debates later, I still feel the same way.

But, In those early days, every now and then the chump actually did something I approved of. His stance on abortion, an issue I could never get to gel with my Republican leanings, seemed pretty cool to me. NAFTA was a tour-de-force of beautiful bi-

partisanship (even if he did just jump start the car-jacked vehicle of the Bush administration).

Americor makes me smile. And his Surgeon General, Joscelyn Elders, was right up my alley...the jewel in the otherwise plastic engagement ring he used to court the American public.

Let's talk about this woman some. Two very publicized issues are a good place to start. And just how much of a jack-ass Bill Clinton is for giving her the boot is a great place to finish.

The first thing is of course the "condom" incident. Stirring waves by actually advocating safe, informed sex and its promulgation in our schools, Elders was hit by a tide of conservative criticism.

Our children should not be having safe, informed sex! They shouldn't be having sex at all! In fact, they're not! They...uh...read the Bible in their spare time! No sex in there! Nope!

Just the most over-rated illegitimate birth of all time.

Well, anyway, I don't want to put anyone off by dissing the Bible et al. I flip through the thing sometimes, it's a gas. The point here is that in a battery of condemnation, Elders stood firm, and reacted with the most dignity I've seen in a public servant in some time. Hers was not a position of politics, but rather, a responsible position of science. It wasn't her job to make people like her, but she was damned if she wasn't going to do the best job she could do.

Scientific advocacy of responsible sex is radically different from political advocacy. Dr. Elders based her statements on facts she has a vast amount of education to backup. Jesse Helms only packs the moral wallop of being a crusty old guy who can't get it up anyway, so why should anyone else be having fun? The whole conflict is so ugly its sickening. And through it all, Elders maintained her position. While Bill Clinton, I imagine, cringed more than he had since that "inhaling" faux pas.

But it wasn't until he canned her that I realized what an absolute git he was. Bill Clinton, who spends more time than anyone I know feeling other people's pain, got rid of his terrific Surgeon for her public declaration about people who feel their own. Well. You know what I mean.

He probably whacked off
Continued On Page 7

SECTION HATE

Aaron Gets Beat Down By The Man

I hate this place. No, I really mean it this time. The folks in financial aid and student accounts have gone too far, along with the punks that run the advising office and the Bureau to Screw Students Going on Leave.

I guess it all began when I tried to matriculate. Coming into the academic year, I owed the school approximately \$1,200, which I was to pay out of pocket from work-study over the course of the year. OK, I can deal with that; it makes a hell of a lot more sense than being told that you owe \$9,000 and being told that it has to paid before you can go to class THE NEXT DAY.

All digressions aside, come October, I wrote a check for \$300. "Now," I said to myself, "I only owe the school \$900, and I can pay all of that next semester." I was pleased that my fiscal year was going so well. Spring matriculation rolled around, and I was content in my debt, knowing that \$900 is considerably less than \$1,200. I'm sure that you can all see where this is going....I tried to matriculate, only to be told that I owe \$1,174.

I'm a music concentrator, and I couldn't solve a calculus problem to save the life of myself or my family, but I never could've graduated from my high school without a grasp of all ba-

sic concepts mathematical.

We've all heard that contemporary American kids are in the shitter in the sciences (including math), and that kids all over the world are doing better than our own sweet priest-meat, and that the U.S. of A. will no longer be competitive in the international market. Frightening words indeed, but the media is making out that this is a new thing. Odds are

that, if the people professionals at student accounts can't subtract \$300 from \$1,200 with the help of high tech, then neither will their kids.

The trend is not new; Americans have been uneducated, ignorant sods for two centuries now, and the only reason that we were ever a world power is that the uneducated have always loved guns, and the bigger the guns, the more comfortable we can be in our ignorance. Japan and Germany have excelled in educating their young since WWII because the Japanese were barred from having a standing military and the German army was deconstructed and replaced by a security force made up of nations still preoccupied with might.

With out military concerns to occupy their waking moments, they have been able to turn their efforts towards more germane exercises, such as educating their

young.

We might as well devour our young, for all of the good that we're doing them in the increasingly competitive world market. If we fail to do it as parents, then we can send them to an expensive private school where they can be fucked with by somebody else's incompetence.

PART II:

I'm trying to go on leave next semester, so that I can go to India to study Karnatic music with Ravam Iyer (that would be like studying angst-rock with Kurt Cobain, except that it is much easier to study with someone who is not...uh...brainless). Now, it would cost me about \$5,000 to just take off one day and live in Madras for four months, but I simply do not have that much money.

I could very easily couch my journey in my Div. III, and so be entitled to financial aid. As it is, I get enough aid so that I only have to scrape \$5,000 together for the academic year. In order to qualify for leave aid, I have to file for academic leave, and that requires paying the school one third of regular semester tuition just to be allowed to fly across the world

Continued On Next Page

Hey, Do I Look Like I'm Rich?

Continued From Previous Page

and effectively bar myself from using any of the school's resources. That would come to about \$6,000, just to get \$5,000

in aid.

On the other hand, I could just go on a leave of absence, save \$6,000, and effectively bar my father from qualifying for the

Jocelyn Had Balls

Continued from Page 5

the night he fired her to make himself feel better.

Does he actually think that silencing her is going to win him another four years? Clinton's re-election will be based on how well the new Republican Congress is going by the time election time rolls around, not the conflagatory comments of his Surgeon General. By '96, if people are sick of Newt, Bill's got it clinched. Of course, if Newt gets the jump on his plan to incarcerate all the liberals in orphanages, we'll see some more gargantuan Republicanism. But the point is, Dr. Elders has nothing to do with it. Bill Clinton, who has silly convictions, but at least seemed to have the courage of them, sacrificed someone who did her job nothing but too well.

Clinton is a wimp. Or worse, a hypocrite of the rankest sort. He talks the talk, but he's too busy going at his legs with a scalpel to walk the walk. The man is gelding himself. The loss of Dr. Elders is only a fraction of this.

I leave you with this question: How much does this man care about the American people if he censors those who would

parent loan that he has to get in order to pay my regular tuition, therefore making it impossible to have the money to go to India.

I really have no point in relating this, except as a warning. If anything good comes of it, I'll publish it so that everybody can take advantage of my experience. But I do have a moral: TAKE THIS SCHOOL FOR EVERYTHING YOU CAN. Use every resource, tap every fund available for student use. We will all get dicked around by this place at least once, the least we can do is do the same to them.

Hey, Prince Greg, I'll be over for dinner around eight. Oh, your dog's ass is sooo taut....mmmmm.....

My name is Aaron, and I am your new Section Hate editor.

Aaron Mulvany

The Watchtower

Needs You

The Watchtower is for political commentary and issues awareness. Well. That sounds kind of boring. How 'bout: The Watchtower is for scathing political criticism and informing the ignorant about the world they live on now that they've come down from the trees! Aw, whatever. But whether you have one raging issue you're dying to get off your chest or (ohpleaseohpleaseohplease) you're interested in a weekly column, send you're stuff in to a paper that would appreciate the opportunity to print it. Just because you're in College doesn't mean the world has faded away. Keep informed and keep opinionated. And bug everyone else with it.

Submissions to BOX 324
for info call Stephanie at X2106
or stop by E-305

On Games

"Do you speak French?"
 "No."
 (She smiles)
 "So I'm like the uncultured American blundering around,"

Thoughts After Midnight

right?"
 "No-I mean, that's not what I mean."

-From Before Sunrise

A few days ago a few friends and I watched Before Sunrise, the latest in a string of movies about "Generation X," films which try, whether they set out to or not, to capture the experience of growing up in a disillusioned and dying era.

And maybe because Before Sunrise is a movie about the awkwardness and contrivedness of all new relationships, or maybe because of the turns my own life has taken recently, I've been thinking about the game, the game we all play.

What I'm talking about, of course, are social games- *the* social game, because, in the end, they're all the same. Because this game is so much a part of our lives, every day, it is difficult to describe or characterize- unless you already have some inkling of what I'm talking about, stop reading now. Without that inborn awareness, none of this will make any sense.

"The game" is a way of describing the verbal battles that

are a part of every relationships- call it sarcasm, wit, bantering, flirting- they are just different aspects of the same way of interacting. I, like many of my friends, have never felt completely comfortable playing the game- there are days when the shallowness and artificiality of most conversation seems repulsive.

And shouldn't it really? The elusive half-truths and witticisms we exchange are, in the end, just ways of defending ourselves, keeping others at a safe distance, at least at first. We play the game as a kind of seduction- in asking questions we look for the hidden answers, the hints that slip out around the words.

"Do you think it'll rain?"
 "Maybe."

The conversation means nothing- it is the slight hesitation before the reply, the wistful smile, maybe, or the sigh that follows that is really what we are looking for, that reveals them as a lover of oceans, or confused, or lonely, or....

So why do we resort to such crude methods? Why bother with the elaborate, roundabout rules of the game?

Well, I can't answer that, really. I don't like the game, have never liked it or been good at it. But here's a justification, for what that's worth:

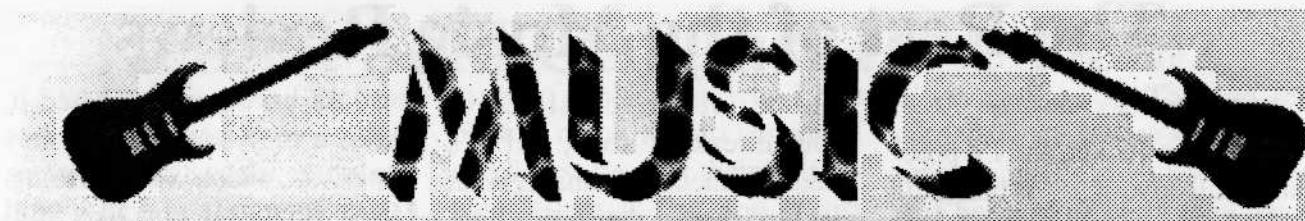
We play the game because people are afraid. And because it is all we know.

The game is a way of protecting ourselves while we are first learning the geography of another person. Rather than revealing ourselves completely, we do so through hints, through implied meanings and silences. And in learning to read this language of subtlety there is a kind of art. And although we may secretly wish that we could avoid all the words, and find someone with whom we could communicate perfectly, silently, the game is all most of us know.

So, in the end, the only justification for the games we play is this: no one wants to be lonely. And since we can either communicate through the game or not at all, we learn the rules, memorize the jokes, and listen carefully, hoping.

February 1995
 Amherst, Massachusetts
 Matthew Flaming

**The Omen Would Like a News Editor!
 Call Jon at x5236**



Ben And His Seven Inches

One thing that I wanted to mention last week, but forgot to, is that if you have any album or show reviews, or any other miscellaneous music news, please feel free to give it to me or anyone else on the staff. I have a relatively narrow music taste, so there is a lot out there that I am totally ignoring. So, if you are into rap, blues, jazz, classical, easy listening, etc., drop

something in my box—#632, or call me at ext. 4761. Oh, by the way, no phish or Nine Inch Nails—we have to draw the line somewhere, dudes.

This week I thought I'd write some stuff about a few 7-inchers that I've bought lately.

Harry Pussy-"Zero de Conduite" dbl 7"(Audible Hiss). Oh, my. I took a chance on this one, and boy did I get burned. I have heard so much about this duo(?), I thought I'd get this to see what all the hub-bub is about. Imagine...black and white photocopied sleeve, with 16 identical drawings of Ronald Reagan. The phrases "Chameleon Army," "Wanted," "UFO," "Inspector Pepper," "Carmen 77," and "SOS" under each Ronnie. I still have no idea if these are song titles or what, 'cause inside the sleeve, I found two black vinyl records, each complete with blank white labels—no titles, no

rpm, no nothin'.

The real joy, however, began when I gave them a spin.... I tried to listen intensely. I tried to listen again. And again, hoping that I was missing something really huge. I've concluded now that I missed nothing. This sucks. Guitar skronk noise—no melody, no rhythm, no harmony, practically no vocals. It sounded like there may have been some weird-ass saxophone and drums creeping through every once in a while, but it was hard to tell. It could be that the recorded medium fails to capture Harry Pussy's on-stage intensity, but as far as I'm concerned, they blow.

Sourpuss-"Rocket Day" (self-released). Well, Sourpuss is a local band (out of Hadley), and I really like to try to support local acts, but when I put this on, my first thought was that I had accidentally turned on 1984-era Van Halen, with a guitar part that made me want to jump. Actually, the a-side, "stab," did get better, sporting the kind of ultra-hookey chorus that we all love to hate. The b-sides were pretty generic pop, and seemed overproduced and watered-down.

I've heard that this band is pretty good live, but I haven't had a chance to see them. Maybe without the lame production help of "Flood" (who is credited with

recording the tracks) Sourpuss could be more than mediocre...we'll see.

Envelope-dbl. 7" (peepland). Ahhhhhh. The only thing that could erase the disturbing memory of that Harry Pussy double 7-inch was another double release that was good...really good. Score. Envelope rocks in a big way. If you haven't heard much about them, this is their 4th release. They are from New York, and one of the band members is Gerard Cosloy, the guy who runs Matador. All four of these songs are strong, bearing similarities to Versus, Ruby Falls, and other bands in that New York clique. I liked "Middle Name" the best—it had good ole-fashioned angry vocals, and the music reminded me of a toned-down Tar. I'm sure there is an Envelope album on the way, which should be a lot easier to find than the 3 singles they have out now, so get it when you see it, you bastards.

Pitchblende/Eggs-"Windshield Kiss" b/w "Song with Contemporary Influences" (Jade Tree). I think it's time that I let you in on a little something about myself: Pitchblende spends a lot of time at the #1 spot on my list of favorite active bands. So, basically they could record themselves doo-

Continued on next page

The Rest of the Music Reviews

Continued from previous page

not be super creative or groundbreaking stuff, but it's good nonetheless. Probably what sets him apart is the simple honesty of his lyrics, like in "Beergasm," where he sings, "I hate this party/ I hate all your friends/ I hate feeling stupid/ I always do in the end." Out of the four songs on this record, "She's the Shit" and "Beergasm" are the best.

On the other hand, I was worried about Eggs' future for awhile, but it looks like Rob Christiansen and Andrew Beaujon have found fresh blood to back them up—Miss Buscher on bass and Mr. Currier on drums. When I saw the title of the song, I started wondering who the contemporary influences were that they were referring to. The song is divided into two pretty distinct halves, the first of which I would say is influenced by none other than Pitchblende. I have no idea about the second half, but it's cool. Incidentally, this is put out by Jade Tree, in Delaware. Another Jade Tree band, Walleye, played here at Hampshire on Thursday—I'll try to have a review of the show for next week.

Karl Hendricks—"I Hate this Party" (grass). Lo-fi from Pittsburgh. Karl Hendricks (this single doesn't have the Karl Hendricks Trio backing him up) doesn't write songs that sound very original. His music sounds like J Mascis if he didn't suck, or Zeke Fiddler. However, there is something about him that won't let me dislike his music. It may

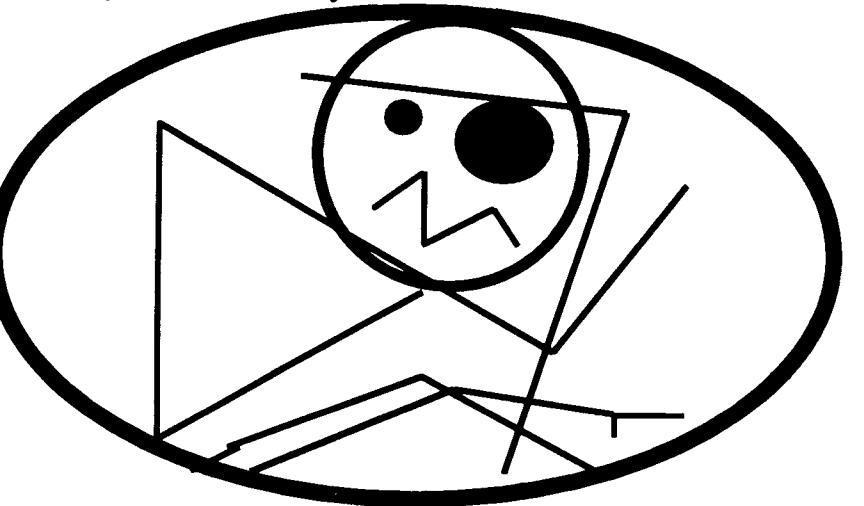
I would have never guessed it, because they sound completely American, which is a good thing. USA! USA! If you like Stigmata-a-go-go, which I do, you'll really like this. The vocals are pretty mellow, and take a back seat to the music, which, although it is pretty straight-ahead, is damned pleasing. "Coffee Cup Revisited" has male vocals and fuzzy guitars, which are kept in check by really clean bass and drums. "Dive" sports a chick singer, with a weird, loopy bridge in 3/4 and a great ending. Keep an eye on Dot Dot Dash—they are a really small label now, but have some cool records to be released soon, including a Laurels e.p.

Tizzy—"New Jersey" b/w "Betty vs. Veronica" (chunk). This is another local band, on a local label, Chunk Records out of Easthampton. Well, compared to Sourpuss, Tizzy is great. At first I thought I was going to be very annoyed at the vocals, but the more I listened, the more her voice lost its edge. One thing is for sure, though: Tizzy plays a lot better when they rock out, as opposed to fiddling around with cutesy stuff that ends up sounding hokey. The jury is still out on this one....

18th Dye—"Coffee Cup Revisited" b/w "Dive" (dot dot dash/Quixotic co-release). I heard they're from Germany, but

That's all for now—next week, maybe some live reviews

"Bad Ass" Ben Piekut
Music Editor



Helmet Sold Out Just Like Deniz

Deniz is gone. The heart and soul of the Omen's music section needs a replacement and here is my first attempt at it. I know that they'll be big shoes to fill, and purple one's if I recall Deniz's taste in fashion, but somehow I'll make it through.

Enough homage to my idol, though, it's time to set the rules. I have no idea what this column will be like. The subject of music will be the main focus but I will at times be carried away by random tangents. This is quite natural for a music writer to do, as Lester Bangs repeatedly demonstrated in his drug-induced writings. Let's make something clear right now: I'm no Lester Bangs. I'm no Deniz. Somewhere in between the two.

I do know that the column won't ramble on for all eternity and that I'll even use capital letters. Articles on Billy Corgan and Kurt Cobain will decrease dramatically and references to Trent Reznor's sexiness will definitely bite the dust. Well, that is unless I go through a change or something.

So I say to you, Deniz, as you beg for spare change in a seedy Greyhound bus station, you are gone but not forgotten.

Yes, I'm sorry but I did indeed attend the Helmet concert at Pearl Street on Feb. 6. Where do I start. Anyone that knows anything about me knows that I've been a long time Helmet fan. Even today, you can periodically hear their deplorable new album, "Betty," blaring from my room. I

have no explanation why I like them so much, at least not now. I recall first hearing their first album "Strap it On" and it just slapping me in the face. I loved Helmet, and I didn't let their enormous record contract get me down, at first.

Helmet signifies the end of it all for me. There surely was a whole line of bands that I supported that made me feel special just because it wasn't exactly what everyone was listening to. Punk-indie music made me feel different from other people. Helmet became an extension of my straight-edge roots. Slowly, however, things started to change, or maybe I finally figured out that things were changing. All of a sudden everyone had heard of all the bands I was listening to. My music tastes didn't get made fun of as much. I saw that I wasn't different at all and was just a big marketing target. Every band that I ever enjoyed listening to either sold out to a major label or was offered a contract. Everyone chose the first route with a few important exceptions such as Fugazi and Big Black.

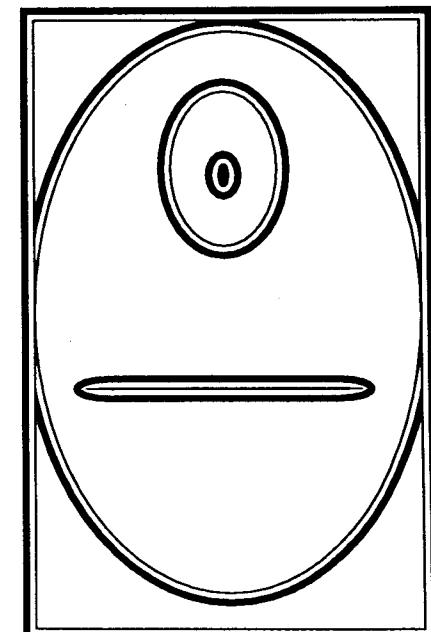
After a bidding war over the band, Helmet signed to Interscope to something like a three album \$2.1 million contract. The bidding for the band heightened after Nirvana's major label debut hit number 1 in '91. Nirvana only signed for \$250,000, just to keep things in perspective. All right here is my point: Helmet is the luckiest band in the world. Why? Be-

cause they suck. They've recorded the same song about forty times. Actually that's not entirely true because recently they have experimented nominally and made worse music than before. At least "Meantime" was powerful and tight, even if the album was one long song. On "Betty" they have put out their worst music yet, but give them time. They can get worse.

I guess Page got tired of all the critics saying that there is no variety in Helmet's sound so he decided to do a horrible wanna be funk-metal type song, along with a banjo tune and a Captain Beefheart cover. Give it up, Page. Just play "Born Annoying" twenty times each night and all the sexually repressed frat boys will spend \$12 to release some testosterone.

The pitiful thing is I'll keep listening and buying anything with the Helmet (Copyright) logo on it. Somebody shoot me.

Andrew Bracken



Who's Afraid of a Dead Old Dyke

Prior to Saturday, February 11, great waves of thespian shame washed over me whenever I faced facts and admitted to myself that I had never attended a Hampshire College theatrical production. Okay, so I sat in on a piece directed by Mary Whithed Spring semester last year, but it was short, a work-in-progress type thing, so it didn't count. Plus, she made me go. I was her SID. (Not to rag on Mary. I'm going to say some very nice things about her, soon, and a balance has to be maintained). So the cruel truth was, after 3 1/2 years, the seduction of the Black Box never quite hit me. The only time I saw theater folk was when they crept out of EDH for some coffee in SAGA.

Well, the arrival of Josh Brassard on my hall this semester, plus all the abovementioned guilt, proved enough of a catalyst to drag me to a show. You just can't resist a production that brings your hallmate back home every night coated in make-up and laden with flowers. Since he's a theatre guy, I should also have been able to say "crawling with chicks," but anyone who read Josh's column last week knows its just not to be.

And now, enough of this irrelevant personal crap and on to the review proper. The work: "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?" The Director: Mary Whithed. The Cast: Josh Brassard, Megan McFeely, Brendan O'Neil, and Shilo McGiff. The Plot: More Disturbing Than You

Can Possibly Imagine. A Synopsis: George and Martha are a staid university couple who battle their way through marriage via alcohol, Daddy, and an imaginary child shakily created to compensate for a barren marriage; Nick and Honey are a new university couple who ignore their battles via alcohol and lots of chemically induced abortions post

their shot-gun-turned-false-alarm wedding. Hello, dysfunction!

Well, if you've bothered to read this far, you deserve to know that the play was emotionally draining, powerfully disturbing, bitterly humorous—and realized through the acting and direction so that all these emotions were done exquisite justice. The setting only enhanced the feeling.

Three hours is a long time in a small Black Box theatre. Three hours with "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?" was like being cloistered in the "Marriage Encounter" annex of Hell...and it left you crying out for more.

Megan McFeely and Josh Brassard, as Martha and George, carried the play in a strong display of just how weak human beings can be. The writing, alternately portraying the grace and shit that human beings are capable of, gave McFeely and Brassard an impressive workout for their impressive talents. The play swirls around their apparent hatred and fragile love for each other, each character using their unique coping skills to counteract the other.

McFeely was cast into a role calling for the mutability and hard-edged pathos of an accomplished actress. She delivered. Handed the role of a "braying" character, McFeely brought out the beauty and horror of Martha, an aging vamp who cannot allow herself to be loved. The emotional surges that Martha goes through tax an audience forced to be empathetic by McFeely's performance. At once whispery, fragile—and then wanton and cruel—Martha evokes qualities we have all seen in our friends, our parents...even ourselves. Her voice, hard-edged, brutal, was haunting; the word "baby" could change from a cherished love to a loathed enemy in a matter of seconds.

Counterpart and direct opposite of this was George, played by Josh Brassard. A chill wind of control in an atmosphere of surging emotion, the few outbursts allotted to George over the play's three acts were all the more terrifying for their rarity. Played to perfection, one can see that George's usual calm demeanor is merely a veneer to hide his impotent rage and frustration. Constrained by his character's facade, Brassard more than met the challenge of conveying emotions while retaining seeming reserve. His range was incredible; from puny intellectual to springing, outraged animal, this character demonstrated the failure of compensation over cure. He doesn't

Continued on Next Page

Virginia Woolf Continued

Continued from previous page
help his wife by coddling her. And only on this night does he "snap" enough to try and change things.

Brendan O'Neil as Nick, the eugenics-crazed weightlifter of the Biology Department, was adequate, getting better and better as the evening progressed—coincidentally, as his character got drunker and drunker. Were I cruel, I'd say something about UMass students and typecasting.... Anyway, O'Neil played a fairly good "lunkhead," but something was lacking. In a cast that made you feel like you weren't in the audience, but merely another guest and too drunk to add fuel to the fire, O'Neil gave me the definite impression that he was "acting." I think he got a couple of lead roles in High School and it went to his head.

To end this catalogue of the cast on a high note, though, I must say that Shilo McGiff brought to the role of "Honey," a character that doesn't even get her own name, but merely a quasi-affectionate epithet, a touching pathos that rounded out the entire play. A tangential character who nevertheless becomes central in both comic and gut-wrenching (in every sense of the word) moments, Honey is the movement in the work. Her various trips to the bathroom, her own private tragedies, her drunken ramblings, all help to move the play along in its marital crash course. Rather than let the part be merely a humorous ve-

hicle, though, McGiff makes Honey a person, a woman scared and helpless, placated and ignored. Her character is a wall-flower. McGiff makes her bloom—even though the blossoms aren't pretty.

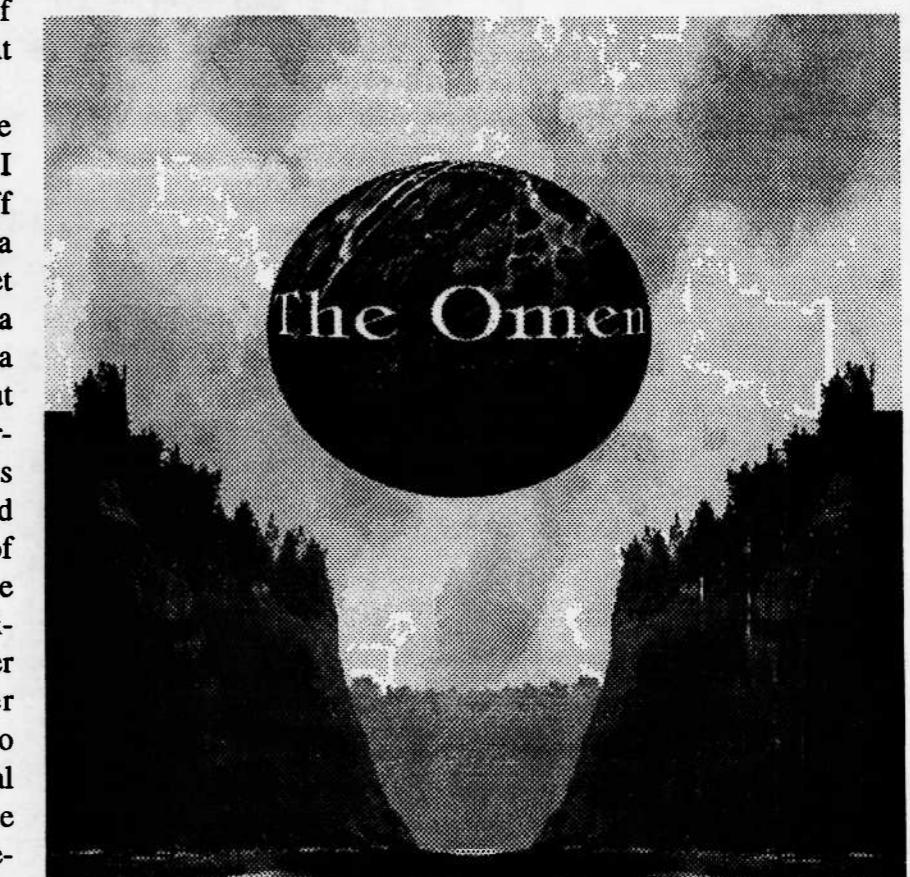
And Director Mary Whithed should have come out to take a bow. Not only did she look *totally* hot in a red dress and a killer shawl, but she brought together one hell of a production. The blocking was impeccable, not only being expedient, but symbolic as well (I've never seen a stool used so effectively). She resisted the temptation to overuse the lighting, trusting her actors to conjure the drama they needed. The set design crew she brought together created a set that

kept the action open but still conveyed a sense of "home." And I'm sure all the other stuff she did was good, too—not being a theater person, I just don't know what the hell it could be.

This show was so good, I may never attend another production at Hampshire again, choosing to instead leave the perfect memory of a work well done as the sole representative of the Hampshire Theater Department. I'll just remember the standing ovation and the roses we chucked at Josh at the final bow.

Of course, that sounds rather sanctimonious, doesn't it? Good theater. It'll do that to you.

by Stephanie Cole



Wondering What's in Your Future? The Omen Will Let You Know...

Aquarius (Jan. 21 - Feb. 19):

Send e-mail to all_students@hamp, and you will make about sixteen new friends, and 2 enemies.

Pisces (Feb. 20 - March 20):

You will go insane and kill the next three people you look at. Incidentally, you will realize in a few minutes that death really does come in threes.

Aries (March 21 - April 20):

Your lucky number is the 35th digit of pi. You figure it out, smartass.

Taurus (April 21 - May 21):

Your Mammy's like a truck, there's always some greasy asshole in her.

Gemini (May 22 - June 21):

Threats to those in positions more powerful than you could be a hindrance to you financially. Tell your boss to get lost and buy something nice for yourself today, it'll be the last time you can for many, many years.

Cancer (June 22 - July 23):

Your rich uncle survived that nasty "accident". It seems his breaks "cut out", and he swerved and hit a tree. I'm on to

you, you thieving son-of-a-bitch. I know your game, and goddamn it, that inheritance is mine. He always liked me more than you, Always... You'll never know what we felt for each other in that cold, dank basement.

Leo (July 24 - Aug. 23):

You will find yourself in a situation where the media is controlled by untalented morons and pretentious "film students". Hey, what's on channel 8?

Virgo (Aug. 24 - Sept. 23):

Stay the hell away from Pisces.

Libra (Sept. 24 - Oct. 23):

You've got a little speck of something on your teeth. No over there. A little lower...No, not that low. Left front tooth, no your left. Almost, one more time. No, I guess it's just a really big cavity. That thing's huge. You might have to get it pulled, or at least a root canal. You know, I heard about a guy who went in for a routine root canal once, and the dentist found all sorts of tumors and shit in there. Well, the guy went into a coma, woke up in 20 years' time, and just keeled over three days later. Oh, you got it off, that was a close one

Scorpio (Oct. 24 - Nov. 22):

Now is a great time to work on long-term projects. This

is because you will soon be incarcerated and/or detained. When you pick up your soap, bend at the knees.

Sagittarius (Nov. 23 - Dec. 22):

Inspire and amuse an entire community, smash a snowman.

Capricorn (Dec. 23 - Jan. 20):

You will design a logo for a college. You will burn in the special place in hell they save for imbeciles.

